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The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin
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Against Being Critical

BY JAMES O. S. HUNTINGTON, O. H. C.

WE live in the age of "labor-saving" devices. We are making frantic efforts to avoid taking trouble. We fluster ourselves in the attempt to "take it easy." It reminds one of a certain hot June morning, when a famous headmaster said to a roomful of perspiring boys who were taking a college examination: "Now, my boys, it is going to be a very warm day, but we shall all get through quite well if we don't weary ourselves ill trying to keep cool."

One of the most unfortunate schemes for saving mental toil is phonetic spelling. It seems as though it would be simpler to spell *phic sikik* or technique *tekneek*. But what treasures of human experience in the long history of our race, what records of various philosophies and religions, would be lost!

Such considerations present themselves to the mind when one undertakes to write about "criticism." For the word itself, if we give heed to its derivation and trace it to its origin, contains its own warning. *criticism* suggests nothing. But "criticism" "critical" gives us "critic" as the person who makes the criticism, and a critic is one

who passes judgment, that it to say makes a distinction, pronounces for this and against that. (Kindred to this, and from the same stem, is "crisis". A crisis means a sharp distinction, a parting of the ways; it means that a time of *judgment* has come, it may be that a choice must be made. When a man comes to "the crisis of his life", he can no longer play fast and loose, he must take his side, for God or against Him. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve".)

Well, now, there is, of course, a place for the critic. If a man is fitted for that difficult and delicate task, he may, in certain fields, serve an excellent purpose. In literature, for example, the critic, having grasped the true standards of literary excellence, pronounces his verdict upon a book that has just appeared. He commends it as good writing,—useful or beautiful,—or he condemns it as trashy, incorrect, or sophistical. So, in other arts, such as music painting, sculpture, architecture, the critic passes judgment, presents his criticism.

But the criticism of which we are thinking is essentially wrong, or at least dangerous,

is the criticism of the character of other people, especially of our own contemporaries. What shall we say as to passing criticism upon them, judging them? What does our Lord say about it? He says, quite unequivocally, "Judge not", and He follows up that command with a warning, "that ye be not judged"; moreover He repeats and sharpens the precept and the warning. "Condemn not, that ye be not condemned". There is no room for evading the order. There is no chance of honestly explaining it away. Anyone who calls Jesus Christ Master is bound, as far as possible, to refrain from any criticism that involves detraction and censure of another. And yet there is, perhaps no sin which we commit so lightly or more frequently. Almost all Christians are guilty in this regard. Nay, the case is far worse than that. Not only do we criticise, but, secretly at least, we admire ourselves for doing so,—for our skill in detecting and

pointing out the faults of our neighbours. Bring it to a personal test. When we are told of someone "I never heard him say an unkind thing about anybody" do we not feel a certain contempt of the person so described as though he must be a very obtuse or feeble individual?

Of course, the answer to this which springs up in our minds is "I quite agree that it is wrong to misrepresent other people, to attribute to them faults or failings of which they are not guilty; but I never do that." I am careful not to pass unjust criticism. What I say about people is the simple truth. That is a plausible rejoinder, but will it pass muster as warranting criticism?

In the Church Catechism, in the Duty to our Neighbour, the gloss upon the Ninth Commandment is "To keep my lips from evil speaking, lying, and slandering". It seems plain that these words stand for different transgressions. Lying implies saying what is false concerning others, perhaps through more love of exaggeration and wish to create a sensation. Slandering is saying what is false with intent to injure another's reputation and malign his character. Evil speaking may be neither of these, but it does mean relating others' wrong doings, their evil deeds. There may be no untruthfulness or wish to do harm, but the very recording of another's offenses without their being any necessity for doing so, is of itself a sin for it is a breach of the old law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", and of the new law given by our Lord, "Love one another as I have loved you."

But there is another question to be raised. Can we be confident that our criticism of another is, as we profess, in accord with truth and justice? Justice has been defined as giving everyone what is due to him. Are we in a position to make that estimate? Can we calculate each individual's merit and demerit, what are his rightful claims against counter-claims that might be made? Would we trust ourselves to any such measure of human judgment?

As we said above, the act of judging men is a comparison with some appropriate standard. We judge of a yard measure by lay-



ST. HELENA AND CONSTANTINE WITH THE CROSS
Flemish Woodcarving

(Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

own alongside the official yard-stick in the Bureau of Standards at Washington. In the criticism of a human person, what standard shall we adopt. There is indeed no perfect standard,—our Lord Jesus Christ. He shows us what man is, what each of us ought to be. But judged by that standard, we are all of us indefinitely defective. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But all are not equally blameworthy. We must measure others by what was possible for them, what could rightly be expected of them. It is not fair to expect a child to exhibit the wisdom and prudence that can only come with age and experience, or to expect the balance and moderation that result only from slowly-formed habits of self-control, and the action of divine grace. And how many grown people criticise children in just that unfair way. To criticise only we ought to know the inherited temperament that makes virtue easy or difficult, the early influences,—even in the first months of infancy,—which have given the soul its tendency towards right and wrong, the environment good or bad, that has moulded the individual in childhood and youth, the force of temptation he has had to meet, the effort, often unperceived and ineffectual,—which he has made, the regret for moral failures which have rendered him secretly penitent and humble. More than that, we need to know all the complexes in his subconscious which have helped or handicapped him, unknown even to himself. Who dare presume to such knowledge as this, even in regard to one's most intimate companion? And beyond all this, to be justified in criticism, we should need to know all that God had planned and is doing for that soul, and how He himself looks upon it. If we did know all this, how different, in many instances, would our sentence be! What force may lie in the French saying that "to know all is to pardon".

There is one way of bringing this to a test—namely, also a personal test,—that may well give us pause. When we are the subjects of criticism, do we not, in nine cases out of ten, meet such censure with a certainty in our own minds,—finding expression perhaps in some passionate assertion,—that we have



JAMES O. S. HUNTINGTON, O. H. C.

been misunderstood and misrepresented?

Well, in a good many instances we are probably quite correct; we have been misunderstood, we have been misinterpreted. But, granted that, is it not practically certain that the same is true as to the criticism meted out by us, is it not immensely likely that to the same extent our criticism was mistaken and unfair?

At any rate, one thing is sure. The time will come for each of us when nothing will be of such moment as that we should have a merciful judgment. And we can, if we will, prepare ourselves against that day by withholding criticism. So doing we may win the one thing that we shall then crave above all others. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy". "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father which is in Heaven is merciful."

The Christian And The Novel

BY DAVID WATMOUGH

In an essay on Charles Dickens, the late George Orwell has the following to say: "... I have been discussing Dickens simply in terms of his "message" and almost ignoring his literary qualities. But every writer, especially every novelist, *has* a "message", whether he admits it or not, and the minutest details of his work are influenced by it. All art is propaganda . . . On the other hand, not all propaganda is art."¹

I have chosen this quotation as a starting-off point for what I have to say, because it seems to me to illustrate the peculiar relevance for the Christian of the art-form of the novel. Elsewhere in the same essay Orwell says: "You can only create if you can *care*", and this leads us straightway to that Christian attitude towards life, represented by what the Quakers call, 'a concern'. Christians are concerned individuals; their consciences, when alive and healthy, are constantly telling them to be concerned with all that goes to make up the mosaic of human existence. Our reading can inform and color the quality of our concernedness, just as a painting or work of sculpture can, and, what is more, it should.

The Christian has a concern to learn all he can about his fellow-men: how they react to the mystery of existence, what they think and feel, how they act. This concern is born primarily of the supreme Christian activity of loving, which demands that the Christian seek identification with humanity, the object of his love. And knowledge serves (though on its own, cannot fulfill) this purpose.

Then the Christian is essentially didactic: he has a gospel to proclaim and a message to teach. This cannot be done in vacuo. There is need of a dialectic—that is to say, a kind of wall, (everything that man does, thinks etc.) against which the Christian can bounce the ball of the Gospel. If he cannot

visualize this wall, if he is ignorant of humanity—every time he throws his ball, he will lose it in the space of human abstraction. We all know or have heard of that pathetic species of preacher who is incapable of addressing a really human situation, and who, therefore never makes vital contact with his audience. We have to throw the ball of Christian love at the wall of mankind (which is visible for us to the degree that we are concerned and interested in it) and it bounces back to us, not only enabling us to see ourselves more clearly—for are we not of the same stuff as it?—but perhaps with knowledge for us which can enable us to quicken our charity and increase the sweep of our compassion.

In other words, this dialectic is the context in which we Christians, called to witness to the faith that is in us, can alone properly function. The Christian needs humanity to inform his Christian self, just as humanity needs to know the secret of Incarnate Love. And reading is one of the finest ways that we can receive vividly, and often at the profoundest level, the quality of the world into which we have been called to live out our Christian vocations.

Again, if we read that kind of writing which is sufficiently exalted to be described as literature, that is writing which is also art, we shall not be learning only about man, but also something about God. We believe that He is Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, and in all art we see the shadow of the absolute Beauty of God, lying in bright shafts across the imagination of artistic man.

Through the medium of the novel then, we have something to praise, as well as something to learn about man as an historical phenomenon, and as he is, collectively and individually in our own generation. And always, of course, there is the experience of entering the artist's own imaginative realm—which enriches us in itself and to which we can attach no utility.

There is more to literature, to art, than

1. From Dickens, Dale & others, copyright, 1946, by George Orwell. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc.

this, but they are the salient points which hinge upon us as specifically Christian readers, and we are not reducing the novel to dreary utility of information by being conscious of these things as we sample what emerges from the crucible of human intelligence and vision as it confronts the gamut of mortal experience.

There is a very great danger for Christians to confine their novel reading to the work of specifically Christian writers who aim in their work—though as a means, rather than as an end—to ‘enflesh’ some facet of the Christian *Kerugma* with their own imagination; producing as a by-product, a kind of artistic apostolate of letters. Such writing should, of course, be read by us, not only for its intrinsic artistic worth, (I am thinking of Greene or a Mauriac and certainly not of Spellman and third-rate stuff of THE FOUNDLING genre), but also because we can receive Christian truth with all the implications arising from its incarnation into the imaginative consciousness of the author, and the modifying effect of the world upon the life of our number possessing the gifts that make this possible. I shall refer in some detail to such works, later, but the point I wish to make now is that the ‘Christian reader’ whom I am addressing is but a Virginia Woolf’s COMMON READER with but the one qualification. Our field is as wide as her’s but what we seek to find is not that something extra . . .

Christian truth has tended, as it has soaked through the cultural fabric of our civilization, to fragmentate, and to issue ultimately in ‘isolate-truth’ which has sometimes borne little superficial relationship to its compound parent. The Christian revelation is often contingent for its expression upon truths being held antinomously but while the presentation of one side of the whole truth at the expense of the other, usually gives rise to theological heresy, it does not *invalidate* the part-truth. And it is the part-truth which usually receives literary expression. The Christian is apt to be shocked at the result, and this is rarely a profitable reaction. I will give two examples.

The central theme of Christianity is the



SAINT MICHAEL

BY AN UNKNOWN SPANISH ARTIST

(Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Incarnation, and from this theme a variety of truths are demonstrated and illumined. When God, obeying the principle of His Own Nature—Love—identified Himself with His creation by taking Flesh, that is, by becoming incarnate, Flesh itself was exalted. It became the manger for Godhead. And with the Resurrection, Our Lord, All God and All Man, took His human Nature into the heavenly places with Him. And with the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, our bodies became a tabernacle, or ‘temple’—to

use St. Paul's word—of the Spirit. All this witnesses to the claim of Christians that there is an *essential* unity between body and spirit. Thus the fleshly principle is seen in a special light by Christians, and doctrines subversive of this special attitude, anciently called manichean, were condemned by them. However, a very great deal of Christian thinking down through the centuries, has been contaminated by this 'anti-flesh' attitude—for a variety of reasons into which we cannot now enter. Suffice it to say that Christian teaching about the body is one of those tricky things, where 'compound-truth' has to be acknowledged if error, (and harm) is to be avoided.

D. H. Lawrence, the English novelist, was brought up with a strictly Non-conformist background. Marked traces of manicheism have always existed in English Dissent and Lawrence reacted violently against it. In novel after novel he sought to demonstrate that the flesh is *not* intrinsically evil,

and that people's attitude toward it should be of wonder and gentleness, rather than torture and hate. But he forgot, or rather was ignorant of, the complementary Christian truth—that the body, to achieve its full potential, needs some measure of discipline and must never be used in such a way that it violates the spirit. He achieved a reputation of being a pornographic writer—which is irony when one recalls that Lawrence was the kind of man to walk out of a room, rather than listen to a dirty joke!—and yet, in spite of his limitations as a thinker, in spite of the erroneous side of his message issuing from its lack of balance, he was recalling Christians to something that many of them had forgotten or denied. When we pick up such of his novels as *SONS AND LOVERS*, *WOMEN IN LOVE* or *AARON'S ROD*, we should not give way to shallow prudery and wallow in a claim to having had our piety shocked. We should approach with humility and while feeling contrition for the distortion of Christianity that a recent generation of Christians presented Lawrence was as a child, give thanks for his magnificent re-assertion of the fundamental importance and dignity of flesh. A teaching that is instant in condemning *abuse* of the fleshly principle as the manichean attitude which really violates the principle of the Incarnation itself.

My other example is less specific. The militant Christian is a realist—love in its vocabulary signifies calvary as well as joy. The words of Jesus in the Gospels, are realistic through and through. Now this active realism—'know thyself' etc.—has often found a substantial literary interpretation in recent years—and, for the most part, in a manner quite divorced from the Christian sense. Many modern novelists strain themselves and (more importantly) their writings to witness to realism: to show life as it really is, to reveal ugliness where ugliness exists, and, less often, beauty, where beauty is to be found. But because realism is seen as an *end in itself*, the extension of Christian activity often seems to fall away. Novelists are not supposed to be mere literary photographers. The Christian who



ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

is an emblem of criminal execution, and hardly be put off by sordidity, but as he reads the novels of such contemporary writers as Paul Bowles, Carson MacCormers and Truman Capote, among the Americans, Alberto Moravia in Italy, Genet in France he finds it hard to believe in the 'city' with which he is presented. The reason for this is because any specific moral experience: the activity of conscience, has been deftly filleted from the world these writers create. One may dismiss the valid crises of conscience, one may deplore the failure to pretend it does not exist is to ignore, not to present, reality. The conscienceless or near-conscienceless person is a rare, and few of us ever encounter them; not a whisper of this interior dialectical struggle is revealed in the characters of LET IT COME DOWN, THE WOMAN OF THE ME, NOTRE DAMES DES FLEURS, REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN EYE. In these novels people commit acts ranging from mere hate-meditations to rape, murder and sexual unorthodoxy (arenas around which conscience clings notoriously) and the characters in them do not ask what is right and what is *wrong*—and then proceed to act contrary to their conclusions, which would be thoroughly realistic. We are tempted to ask why? The answer is simple. Before the acknowledgement that man is a mortal animal—which alone allows him to be moral—conflicts with the authors' dogma. Conscience is seen as a Christian phenomenon which it is not, and is therefore avoided. In all this we learn that a reaction to a Christian morality can produce its own kind of un-realism on the part of those sensitive to the restrictions that such a morality imposes. Writers can teach us un-truth as well as truth . . . The really realistic writer—though finding Christians and their doctrines obnoxious would not neglect the observation of something so integral to human action as reflection. We thus learn something of the measure of the world's rebellion to the dis-integrating Christian 'rule' over society. A first-rate realist like Andre Gide, who wanted to be a Christian but could never ultimately reconcile himself to it, was afraid of treating of conscience or any-



MADONNA AND CHILD

thing else—THE IMMORALIST is a case in point—because he knew that realism was contingent upon sincerity. And sincerity is not the strongest point with much that is contemporary. After reading a great deal of modern novel writing, it is always a relief for me to return to Gide because, with him, truth mattered; it was something more than a technique—it was a mainspring, and his sincerity of quest is evident in novel after novel.

But today's writers offer us something. There is an attempt to harrow fresh ground. Carson McCullers reveals the world of a deaf mute to us in *THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER*, and with a strikingly vivid pen, reveals the life and atmosphere of a small southern town. The underlying tensions are all there; the horror, the heat; it is like a combination of Hogarth and Stieglitz. But ultimately, there is no dialectic, no moral tension, no real *movement* backwards or forwards. This is, I think, a weakness in her writing, as it is in Capote and Paul Bowles or again; in the life of the prostitute in Moravia's *WOMAN OF ROME*. But at the same time, it is an almost *necessary* weakness. It is portrayal: not only of aspects of Southern life, Western hypocrisy and the impact of one culture pattern against another in North Africa, but, much more importantly, an indication of the unconsciousness of the moral struggle on the part of the authors, who, in this matter, reflect faithfully, the attitude of many of their intellectual generation.

For the Christian, and the Gide-ian realist, there is something just a little insipid in the kind of writing I have mentioned. And a pre-occupation with the bizarre can never adequately atone for an ignoring of the eternal struggle which determines that there is nothing static in existence, that we are either falling back, wasting our wisdom, or struggling painfully, minutely forward.

All this, of course, is no attempt at a complete criticism of these novelists; there are other weaknesses such as the 'misty sameness' that hangs especially, over far too much of contemporary American letters—perhaps as a result of being brushed directly or indirectly by that dreadful institution, the Creative Writing School. And there are strengths too, that I have not mentioned. But these fall outside the scope of the Christian and the novel.



In passing, it is perhaps of interest to note that in contemporary Soviet writing, where one should expect some degree of dialectical tension (they are, after all, fond enough of the word 'dialectic') one finds very little that rises above melodrama. In story after story as one reads through such publications as *SOVIET LITERATURE MONTHLY* there appears the same dreary monotony of young men and women lecturing their mothers for putting their hearts and family loyalties before impersonal, monstrous erections of initials standing for the 'Young Peoples Pioneer Movement of This or That.' The reason for this is precisely the one which has occasioned much inferior writing from Christian pens: when the 'message' or teaching merely savages the language and stifles the art-form altogether. The balance between 'something to say' and the creative genius of 'how to say it' is subtle, but it is vital. In our Western World, too many writers today, who are excellently endowed with the power to say it, have too little to say. In the Soviet East the situation is more comparable with a great deal of so-called Christian literature in nineteenth and early twentieth century England and America when certain clerics and hordes of women simply bubbled to the brim with moral axioms, and who rushed into print without a bow or a bob to the language they were misrepresenting. Mercifully the dust has now settled upon the swarms of novels that dealt with ambitious curates and coy virgins, but in the present situation, in all respects, really better. Can art, especially the novel, flourish outside the context of belief or creative belief? Emyr Humphreys, one of the younger and more promising novelists of our time has this to say:

"A novelist who concerns himself with the human situation at once confronts religion . . . When in communication with an audience of any size, even secular art is never far from the fringe of religion. To a contemporary novelist however, the Protestant principle has the advantage of belonging to the prophetic rather than the priestly tradition since professionally the novelist has more

learn, more to gain, from the prophet in the priest. It is part of the prophetic power to grapple with a contemporary situation and read into it, and out of it, the meaning and the Will of God. No two prophecies are exactly the same, since no two identical situations can be found; and yet history continues to unfold the ancient, ageless mystery of the relationship between an unconditional God, an infinite Creator, and the created, finite, conditioned yet aspiring mankind. "There is nothing new under the sun" and yet at every moment of living must be something unique.

Every situation for the Protestant novelist, must be approached not merely as an event to be described, or even to be carefully and honestly interpreted: at the heart of every significant situation there is a mystery, like the universe in the grain of sand, which he must touch or at least approach: and the mark of his soundness of judgement and sureness of aim will be the glow and flourish of triumph about his work."¹

It is the failure to be even remotely familiar with this approach, that accounts for the gutless quality in many of the novels being written today, but nevertheless, they should be read, for one does not have to walk very far to find people who turn to drugs and books, to sex and war, precisely because they feel a gutlessness in life, themselves.

Yesterday the better novel had something to say and could say it magnificently. The voice, the poise, existed then, in greater quantities than in our time, between 'message' and 'matter'.

Thomas Hardy was not content to describe the life of his rural "Wessex" or just to interpret it. He attacked fiercely, what he considered was wrong with it—and Christianity, as he perceived its effect, was not exempt from his blasting. Hardy's own dialectic was achieved by a confrontation of faith (which he usually identified with a degrading fatalism), with his own fiery un-faith, and apart from the fact that this provided a

"The 'Protestant' Novelist" —article in THE SPECTATOR, London, Nov. 21st, 1952.



SAINT PAUL

solid vertebrae to his novels in contrast to the supine efforts that represent so much of our own literature and existence, there is surely a lesson for the Christian in his preaching. Here is an excerpt from JUDE THE OBSCURE.

The heroine, Sue is speaking: "All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon us, His poor creatures, and we must submit. There is no choice. We must. It is no use fighting against God!" "It is only against man and senseless circumstance", said Jude. "True" she murmured. "What have I been thinking of! I am getting as superstitious as a savage! . . . But whoever or whatever our foe may be, I am cowed into submission. I have no more fighting strength left; no more enterprise. I am beaten, beaten! . . . 'We are now made a spectacle unto the world, and to the angels, and to men!' I am always saying that now."

Is that quality of senseless fatalism that is represented over and over again in the Wessex novels, completely vanished from Christian circles? I don't think so. I meet a sub-Christian nihilism among the followers of Him Who said: 'Fear not little flock!' and 'The gates of hell shall not prevail'—though it is not necessarily couched in Dorset dialect. The Christian can perceive the *confusion* for

Hardy, presented through his characters, of Christianity *with* the cultural impact that it has made through the centuries. Is that not still so? In all places? Among all Christians? Hardy did not raise 'culture' to the altar in order to worship it. His world was less precious, than ours. Like Gide he was a passionate realist, unafraid to denounce what he took for unrighteousness or insincerity. Our Western European culture is indeed a child of the impact of Christianity upon the social fabric, and, because of this, there is much worth preserving, but it is *not* holy, *not* sacrosanct. It contains many evils; the seeds of death struggle to flower within it. Hardy's era has passed, likewise the facile humanist faith to which he gave allegiance has in many places disappeared. But he was raised up, a prophet among us, and from his resounding knells of doom, we can learn the power of distortion, the menace of confusion over the Church and the ephemeral context of its incarnation. There *is* "a glow and flourish of triumph about his work".

The Russian Dostoievsky presented in

THE IDIOT, THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV, and CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, the place of creative suffering, necessary dereliction in our lives. No false optimism here, no pseudo-realism, instead a fine gold strand of Russian Christian thinking—the thunderous re-iteration of the emblem of love—of all love—yours and mine—is the Gibbet: that total love is involved in catastrophe and frustration. The frustration of rejection and the passion identification which love demands, thwarted constantly by human pride which *always* isolates. The vocation to failure that love invokes—"they all forsook him and fled." "The loneliness of love-defeated-in-time which is the significance of mortality."

Not only our knowledge of human nature but our knowledge and comprehension of the mystery of suffering love, is stunted if we are not vividly aware of these things. As Dostoievsky reveals them through his chosen artistic medium, through the power and beauty of words, in a manner and to a degree which has never been surpassed.

END OF PART ONE.



A GENTLEMAN IN ADORATION BEFORE THE MADONNA
By Giovanni Moroni

(Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.)
[Kress Collection]

The Processes of Sin

BY SHIRLEY C. HUGHSON, O. H. C.

It would be an unfortunate thing, fraught with danger to the soul, if we gave too much attention to sin. The real Christian is not the putting away of evil, but the cultivation of good. It is quite necessary to have a garden clear of weeds, but a garden which is kept clear of weeds, but in which no good seed is sown, is of no profit. Nevertheless, sin is a subject to which a certain definite attention must be given, just as the physician who is subject to a deadly disease of the body must mark the symptoms so as to know how to deal with the peril should it occur.

There is a regular process by which sin enters the soul, and achieves its final deadly result. The steps in this process are seven in number—Suggestion, Pleasure, Consent, Habit, Necessity, Death.

The first movement towards spiritual death is the suggestion which comes to us to think, say, or do, something that is of the nature of sin, that is, something which is a violation of the will of God. Or it may be a suggestion to omit to do or say or think that which God wills us to do, say or think.

The devil, directly or indirectly, is the author of every such proposal. He comes to us and suggests the evil thing just as a man might meet you on the street and propose that you join in the commission of some act which would be contrary to the law of the land. Satan may do this through his own direct contact with us; or it may be through temptation brought to bear against us by some fellow creature, man or devil; or, possibly, it may arise out of the evil in our own hearts which we have in the past allowed to take place there. But in every case, Satan, in one or another way, immediately or remotely, is the author of it.

But the fact that the suggestion comes to our mind to do that which is evil does not in itself constitute sin. So long as we do not allow it to pass beyond the sphere of mere

suggestion, there is no sin. For the trying of our faith, and the perfection of our holiness, God permits the tempter to cast into our minds as into a mirror, the evil thought. Often, we have no power to put it away. It persists, do what we may. God, indeed, allows it to persist, in order that having fought a good fight, we may be worthy of the crown which can be claimed only by those who have thus fought.

But this persistence does not constitute sin. The fact that the man who tried to persuade you to violate the law, persists in his effort, does not make you guilty. On the contrary it affords opportunity to cultivate strength and virtue by long continued resistance.

If we can imagine a mirror endowed with intelligence and right feeling, we might understand its protesting that it did not wish to reflect ugly things, but it cannot help it if we hold the ugly object before it. But just as the mirror is not stained or marred by this ugly reflection, so our souls are unhurt by the temptation which the devil is able to project into the mirror of our minds. We are not able wholly to control our thoughts, but so long as we withhold our consent to the evil thing, so long as we refuse to countenance its presence, however persistent it may be, it produces in us no sin. Our inability to put away the thought is a part of our infirmity, and infirmity is not sin. Neither are the consequences of infirmity to be regarded as sin if they do not result from our consent to that which we know to be contrary to the will of God.

Says a great spiritual teacher,—“Nothing is sin to us which has not some consent of the will. What is done without, or against, our will, rather takes place in us than is done by us. Even though it be the result of some past actual sin, it is not sin to us now, unless our will in some way go along with it.” (Pusey. “Parochial Sermons,” II. 334).

But this security from sin does not lessen

the obligation to do all that we can to drive out the evil thought; for while the fact of its persistence does not in any sense constitute sin, yet that persistence, in the case of most of us, involves peril. We must contend against the suggestion to evil, for God allows it to exist just in order to afford us opportunity to gain experience, strength and skill in the spiritual warfare. To be lax about our resistance constitutes a fault in itself, even though we do not yield to the suggestion. He is not regarded as a good soldier who is careless and unwatchful in the presence of the enemy, even if this fault does not lead to defeat and to his being taken prisoner.

The most effective method of dealing with tempting suggestions to sin, is by indirect rather than by frontal attack. Divert the

mind from it. It is common experience when engaged, for example, in reading, to have the mind wander off after extraneous things. In such cases by an act of the will we seek to bring the attention back to the matter at hand, and by persistent use of the will to hold it there. Any person of normal intelligence and mental control can say, I have neither time nor inclination to think of this matter now; I must put my attention upon this other affair." And he immediately does so. This is the ordinary mental process by which men pass from one task to the next, from one aspect of their daily work to another. He who is incapable of thus regulating his attention through power of will, is what is known as an incompetent, and when it is a very marked condition we speak of such unfortunates as defectives. They are



SAINT BONIFACE PREACHING IN GERMANY

infrequently placed in sanitariums to protect them from the consequences of their incompetence.

In the ordinary business of life a normal man is supposed thus to regulate his thoughts and actions so as to be able to have some measure of success. The same man is to be expected of the normal Christian. He is devoted to a spiritual business which requires care and application. There are certain things which when admitted into his life, make it impossible for him to transact successfully this spiritual business. These things are what we call sin. A man is bound to avoid that which will ruin his business. When suggestions to sin come, he is under the obligations to do his utmost to withhold his attention from them, and by an act of his will to set his mind upon the thoughts and actions which if carried out will produce stress. The business man is resolute to devote himself during business hours to business affairs. He admits nothing into his mind which either by wrong method or by direct effect, would hurt his business. The Christian must follow the same principle, remembering that he has twenty-four business hours in every day in the year. In the matter of pursuing the Lord's business there are no holidays, no off-hours.

It is this that constitutes one of the most terrible things about sin. While, as we have said, the devil, directly or indirectly, is responsible for all temptation, nevertheless we enter into, and deliberately assume a definite share in his responsibility whenever we commit a sin. A very great deal of the actual sin committed in the world, has no immediate connection with the tempter. By repeatedly yielding to him in the past, we have so conditioned ourselves that, given a certain set of circumstances, we automatically do the thing that is sinful. The particular sin becomes a normal reaction to the particular set of circumstances.

A man gives way to a temptation to profanity under stress of anger. He yields again and again, and the psychological result is that whenever the like circumstances recur he breaks into profanity without the devil having to make any suggestion regarding



SHIRLEY CARTER HUGHSON, O. H. C.

it. In fact, the devil may be entirely ignorant of the incident. He may never tempt such a man directly to blaspheme. He knows such a man so well that without using any of the ordinary stimuli which we think of as temptation, he can trust him to blaspheme.

It is very necessary, therefore to keep in mind when the suggestion to sin comes, that with every yielding we not only offend God at the time, but we sow in our hearts the seed of future evil suggestions which will, sooner or later, most surely spring up and bring forth its painful, if not deadly fruit. But even so, if the resistance to the suggestion is prompt and resolute, its emergence does not constitute us sinners. We are responsible for the temptation, but we still have the power to say it nay. As Dr. Pusey expresses it, "Past sin involves present trial, not present sin" (*Ibid* II. 335.)

The second stage is the pleasure aroused by the suggestion. It may be definite and pronounced, but still this does not constitute sin. This pleasure lies in our lower nature, but no harm is done if we do not let it have its way. On the contrary, the greater the pleasure we would have in consenting, the greater the victory if we do not consent. Suppose there is someone who years ago did you a grievous wrong. Whenever you see him, the old bitterness surges up in your heart. It would give you keen pleasure to

do or say something that would avenge your wrong. The strong desire may be present, but if you are able to say, "I am resolved, whatever pleasure I might find in it, to do or say nothing, because I know it would be contrary to the will of God, and His will I am determined above all else to follow," not only would there be no sin, but you would gain a victory, and your soul would be unstained.

It matters not how long the suggestion might last, or how impossible it may be to put away the accompanying sense of pleasure. So long as we can say no, we are without sin. It may bring suffering, but it does not bring sin. Indeed, the very fact that it causes suffering, is the guarantee that it is not sin.

The fatal moment is when we give our consent to the suggestion which conscience and judgment have told us is contrary to the will of God. When we thus yield, the guilt is ours. The door of the heart is flung wide, and the evil one is bade to enter in. When this is done, the fault is our own. Satan cannot make us sin. He has no power to force our wills. Every sin is committed through the deliberate surrender of our wills to him. In every instance God gives us sufficient grace to withstand the most powerful assaults of the enemy; in fact, in every soul that is in the grace of God, the real battle is between the tempter and our Lord Himself, He acting through our wills. But He can do nothing unless we co-operate with Him. In its essence every yielding to temptation is a rejection of our Lord and an acceptance of the service of Satan. This is what gives to sin its peculiarly heinous character.

The will once given up to the enemy, the act of sin follows. If it be a mortal sin, the

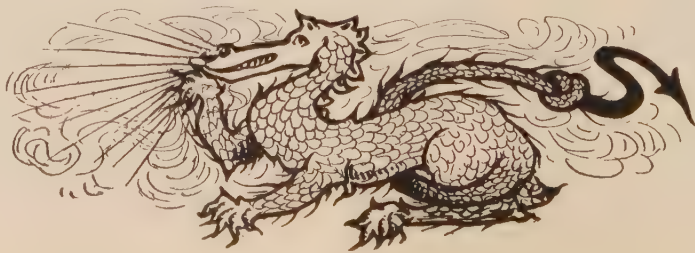
act signs and seals our covenant with Satan. We submit to his rule, and our act of sin is the sign and pledge which we give to him that we have deserted the service of our Crucified Saviour, and yielded our allegiance to his cause. It is our naturalization papers in the kingdom of hell.

Habits, either good or evil, are acquired by the repetition of acts. A thing once done it is easier to do it the second time, the third and fourth quickly follow, and ere we are aware of it, the habit is formed. This means that the circumstances being repeated, the will, as though by second nature, perhaps with no real reflection, repeats the act.

It is at this point that the consideration of the awful character of sin is forced upon us. The worst thing about sin is its sinfulness, its capacity to bind us hand and foot and deliver us over to the power of evil. It obliterates the likeness of Christ, and stamps upon the soul the likeness of Satan. It takes a member of Christ who is "flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone," and makes him a member of Satan. The branch of the true Vine is severed from Him, and the channel through which His divine life had course became filled with the venomous virus of sin.

Unless the soul, realizing its condition, flees to the feet of God in penitence, necessity of action follows upon the acquisition of habit and so binds the soul that it cannot choose but sin. Its faculties become trained by long habit to do that which is evil, and that which is good and righteous becomes foreign to it.

This brings the final consequence, death—death to all that is noble and righteous. The conscience which was once so sensitive to the slightest impulse from the Holy Ghost becomes desensitized so that it can no longer register the inner movement of the Spirit.



From All Thy Sins

Of all the great challenges which the Church offers to mankind, one of the most vital is certainly the Sacrament of Penance. That it is often not well understood even by those who nominally believe in it, is too obvious to be contested. Even more unfortunately, however, it is, as a subject, largely avoided or ignored nowadays by the body of Catholic authors, possibly as too controversial, or perhaps because it is felt to be an "unfortunate" barrier to proselytism which might better be sidestepped until the sheep is safely within the fold. As a practical and strategical matter, this may very well be a justifiable approach. And yet it is certainly not an intellectually or spiritually honest justification. It appears even a little jesuitical, and I hope for that reason, that I am entirely wrong in making such an observation.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that of late the subject of Penance in the Anglican Communion has had little attention given it in print. Now and then a tract, perhaps, or a pamphlet or small volume, but nothing at all in proportion either to the importance or the "difficulty" of the sacrament itself. For its history we must rely chiefly on Rome, for its theological significance our own communion has provided a minimal authority, but for its spiritual meaning, its impact upon the individual heart, we are given no modern sources other than the lives of a certain few saints and the personal experiences of our own confessors.

Moreover, much of what we can glean from sources such as these is expressed almost exclusively in the special language and from the special point of view of the confessor-priest. I do not deprecate this fact, since such instruction of course provides the necessary stamp of authority to its teaching. Nevertheless, there is a limit to its value as an exclusive source of information. Why is there so little written from the layman's point of view? The approach of the confessor and of the penitent is fundamentally different; for the confessor, however frequently he may come as penitent himself to the dark

little box, is by very reason of his own humanity, never able wholly, it seems to me, to put aside the priestly approach. Accordingly, I believe that even in this day of compartmentalized and specialized knowledge and experience, the obverse side of the picture should be given some light. It must have some value.

Confession has for centuries been a great rock upon which Protestantism has taken issue with Catholicism—the blindest center of bitter dispute and perverse misunderstanding. To the great body of the Church that believes, however, the doubt and denial that have found so many champions are both mystifying and challenging. Doubt is a tremendous stimulus to persuasion, but somehow, in spite of ages of effort, the doubt has never satisfactorily been resolved. Without attempting a theological exegesis of the divergencies in the sectarian understanding of sacramental grace—an attempt I am wholly unqualified to make—I should like to suggest that there is often a far more simple barrier to the confessional for the ordinary devotee: the individual that entirely obviates the need for seeking any other or more profound bases for rejecting it. Which bases, in any case, even if they exist, do not trouble most churchgoers a great deal.

Confession is a great spiritual healer, probably the greatest of them all. It offers, at little cost in time, some of the benefits of the psychiatrist's couch, and, much more important, all the benefits of sanctification and salvation. But Confession is hard. A first confession, at least for a convert, is unimagineably hard to make; other and later confessions are not much easier, and frequently they are harder, and grow harder even with constant practice. Certainly, however many times the sacrament of Penance is invoked, it never grows less difficult for any individual, assuming always that there is a continuous and serious striving for contrition. Even Catholics, born to the faith, and "good Catholics," whatever that phrase means, are very cautious and very shy about the sacrament.

I know of several who believe in it firmly, as in all elements of the Catholic faith, but who privately and shamefacedly admit that they have not made a confession in years. Perhaps they are only superficial Catholics, possibly they are very much in the minority—I hope so. Still, the fact remains that the chief barrier to them, as to so many others, is the sacrament itself. Why is it so hard, why is it so much to be feared? In a very real sense, all men fear it, simply because the Devil fears it. The fear may be wholesome and salutary—or foolish—but the fact remains that there is fear.

"There is mercy with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared."

Fear exists before, during and after confession. It can approach pure terror, and such terror cannot but destroy penitence, even in the midst of absolution. For confession brings men close to Hell, closer than sin alone does. It is like the edge of a precipice that must be scaled on the road to salvation, and it is small consolation to argue that the cliff is behind.

I have heard it said that those who rail most against Confession have never visited a confessional. That is, I believe, a facile generalization, and probably not true at all in the early days of the Reformation. One need only go through a particularly dissatisfying session in the box, and the temptation grows strong within the stubborn heart to denounce the sacrament as no more than a clerical makework to fill up the dull hours between masses! I suppose no confessor-priest would ever be tempted in that particular direction, but the layman is, and tempted solely by the apparent failure of the sacramental grace itself.

"My God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me."

The grace doesn't fail, of course. It is the all too human penitent himself who has faltered. An interesting exposition of just such an occurrence can be found in Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain*. Less dramatically possibly, the same thing has happened often to many of us. For some it always happens or seems to happen. For some the confessional is deeply dreaded for

many days before the fateful step is taken, although few of us can claim to bear a heavier cross than that alone. It seems heavy enough.

When Saturday comes, some long expected and frequently deferred Saturday, the penitent will go, finally, because he knows he must. He will go devoutly, humbly and fearfully. If the senses of sin is especially strong within him, his knees will seem like water when he approaches the church, and if he has to wait, he will go gratefully into a quiet corner to rehearse over and over again his little list of sins. He will scourge his soul, his memory and his conscience, and strive for confidence, faith and love. He may write his sins down on a little slip of paper so that they will not readily be forgotten. Probably they are the same poor sins that have come too often to the same fountain before.

"My soul hath long dwelt among them that are enemies unto peace."

And then, the door will open, and it is his turn. Balm and absolution wait upon him, and his heart almost fails. There is no question of faith at this moment. But on his knees, once inside, every sin, great and small, venial and mortal, is instantly forgotten, and all he can see is the crucifix and his confessor's left ear. All he can hear is his heart beating dumbly, and all he knows is that doubt is within him, that his courage is going fast, and that the Adversary is close indeed. Granted that this closeness is a profession, an acknowledgement of the penitent's very real desire for repentance (and the penitent may even be fully aware of that), the desperate proximity of Satan is not conducive to a relaxed and careful examination of personal sin. God is willing that salvation not be easy—why should it be?—but it is in this place a dreadful contest, and the penitent, alas, often loses.

"They have laid a net for my feet, and pressed down my soul."

Or if he does not lose, he nevertheless has no way of knowing that he has triumphed, and, accordingly, absolution will come to him cold and unsatisfying. It is part of the test, of course, and faith is the only answer. But mortality is frail, and instinctively trust



"THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST CLEANSETH US FROM
ALL OUR SINS"

of its own emotions. How is man to know whether the warmth that comes from a "satisfying" confession and absolution is truly a sign of grace, or merely the intervention of the Devil to gloss over a lack of sincere repentance. Conversely, a "cold" absolution is of itself not rejection. In a confessional, however, a mere mortal is scarcely rational, much less analytical. He may weep with frustration, but he cannot be certain whether or not he has won, whether or not he has been, in the words of the divine admonition, truly penitent. So much hinges upon that penitence.

He stumbles out of the box and, dutifully, goes to make his penance. Still shaken by the ordeal just past, he may remain a long while in the quiet of the dim church in order simply to recollect his senses and adjust his eyes, so that he can see the words of the psalm or collect he must read, and so that he can impress its meaning upon his mind.

"Thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble."

He may have to do his penance many times before he can drive the terror out of his soul, and concentrate upon the bare hope that is

now all he has with which to face the world again.

*"Thou art my hope, and my portion
in the land of the living."*

I do not intend to suggest that hope itself is not enough; the important point is the effect that confession has had upon the sinner. It has brought him through faith by a long, dark road and stripped him (through the rigors of self-examination and remorse) of the paltry veneer with which most of us are content to disguise ourselves. And it has left him, at the end, with nothing but fear and hope to clothe his nakedness. Whether or not he has in fact been cleansed and healed, while there is yet hope, however slight, he must act as if he has. Henceforward the world and life will be different. The old and easy defenses are gone now, and the hard road to salvation has been chosen, at least for the time being. The immediate prospect is not a light one to contemplate, and it occurs for every true penitent after every real act of contrition.

I have been told that sorrow goes into the confessional and joy comes out of it. I am sure that that is true for the angels that walk

with men. Possibly it is enough to know that. And to be sure, even men may emerge exhilarated by the release of damnation.

"Thou hast given him his heart's desire."

But many never do. As a child, my own infrequent confessions were wonderful purging experiences. I used to love to take a bath directly after confession so that for a little while I could be clean both inwardly and outwardly. It is harder to get clean now. And the fierce joy I once felt eludes me also, most of the time.

Perhaps it is particularly a lack of faith, or, more likely, a lack of depth in love, the ultimate concomitant of faith. But since love depends first upon faith, and that, to a large extent—it seems to me—upon hope, the problem must always return to the basic riddle, is hope enough?

Such a question certainly answers itself. Hope is the only positive link that man has with eternity, the only source from which he can derive his puny claim upon the mercy of God and the love of His Son. All this appears fairly evident upon mature reflection.



We then, who cannot take our hearts with our minds, who cannot be rational and penitent at the same time, must somehow learn that reason and logic have no essential part in the act of penitence, however important they may be to faith. We may hope more if we will fear less, still perhaps we would do well to put the emphasis not upon the intellectual effort involved in overcoming fear, but simply upon achieving hope in larger measure. Fear is a cross, and, by the same token, it is a sin to the extent that it is permitted to overbalance hope; nevertheless it would be ridiculous to suggest as a solution that the occasion of fear should itself be avoided. No soul is very strong that allows itself no opportunity to surmount temptation. We might escape—as so many do—the fear that comes with us into the confessional simply by by-passing the confessional. There is no question but what that solution will generally achieve the desired result as long as life on earth lasts. For many, that is enough.

But hope, the devout awareness of our utter dependence upon the mercy of God, gives us nevertheless the right and the power to avoid fear—to a considerable extent—without avoiding the temptation to fear. If we keep that hope before us always, if we submit to hope alone, if we make that hope itself a part of our penitence, part of our self-examination, part of our confession, the very essence of the absolution that always comes to us, truly penitent, whether we know it or not, then fear will have very little room to torment us. This is certainly not a shortcut to easy grace. Hope is never readily seized upon, even when it is the only straw and there is no reason why hope should come easily, any more than faith or love. And there would be no need for the confessional at all if these latter virtues were easily come by. There is no reason why salvation should be cheap for men who can give so little to the Lord who offers so much in return. Absolution was purchased at a price men could not pay, and it cannot come to us mechanically with the flipping of a switch, or sentimentally with the telling of our beads. We must achieve something for God, too.

All we can offer God is ourselves, however we may dress up that offering with the pretty pomp and ceremony of pride and display, however we may hide that offering in foolish surrender to fear, or bury it in vain arrogance or an excess of empty zeal.

Every supplication for grace must cost us ourselves if we are to find that grace. That is as true, of course, with all sacraments as it is simply with prayer; but confession, like prayer, is a lonely gift when it is given. It is not as when we stand with the Hosts of Heaven to offer the one, true, immortal Sacrifice; we are not joined by choirs of angels. We kneel alone in the confessional, and talk with God through His priest. And God talks to us. No wonder we often feel fear. The prayers of saints or angels may have assisted us in repentance, but when we come to be cleansed by God, we come by ourselves. And no one can do that for us, however many prayers are said on our behalf to urge us onward and upward.

Confession is, ultimately, a pure act of hope, and it is easier if we know that. It is not the highest form of prayer, but it is as high as many of us can ever achieve on earth, and it partakes of all the hardest elements of prayer with none of the attractive features of solitude and privacy. In a sense it is a public act without any of the neurotic and pathological stimulus of a public confessional. Of course, some do make of confession a sort of sounding board for trivia, some are never more than mechanical, and others cannot resist the blind impulse to try to shock the poor man who must listen with God, but these are the exceptions, let us surely hope, and part of the burden the confessor himself must bear.

For the most part, confession is a solemn obligation owed by the Christian to himself, as he loves God. As in prayer, it affords man an opportunity to sit at the feet of his Lord, to purify his life for service, to make himself as worthy as he can of the Divine love. But the penitent must not ever expect His gratitude in the quickened pulse, the sudden glow of warmth, the bright flame of piercing revelation. When we were very young in love, perhaps, those signs were afforded us

as tokens of God's affection, to lead us on in faith, to show us what God will ultimately give His children for their hearts. Now, however, we are older in life, and hard and stubborn. We must not now expect to be fondled and carressed. We have found the way by God's help, and now we must pursue it, not alone, surely not alone, but blind as we are sinful, and cold as we are proud. The way is easy enough, for God has made it so, although some of the steps may seem long. It is not by any means an escalator that carries us forward and upward without effort on our part. There would be no virtue in our love—and there is little enough anyway—if the reward were always dangled in our eyes, and ready to the touch simply for the asking. The love of a child for its mother is hardly a mark of great virtue while it feeds at her breast, for then it is wholly animal and offers nothing of itself. Grown men and women can at least do more than that. To pursue the analogy a little further, confession enables us—if we will—to feed upon hope for our salvation. We are thus weaned from inert and passive submission. We are taught ultimately to stand upon our own legs, not stubbornly, but with love, not as animals who act by instinct alone, but affirmatively, and humbly always. If terror comes, and it may, it comes because of our basic unworthiness. We need not, however, be ashamed of that, for in that we are like all men save One. We dare not seek to avoid terror by running from it, for if we do, we abandon hope and will starve to death. But death has no place in the confessional.



"OUR SOUL IS ESCAPED EVEN AS A BIRD OUT OF THE SNARE OF A FOWLER"

Knowledge of God

BY FREDERICK WARD KATES

The knowledge of God is not only life but also the highest kind of life, life eternal.

—Charles Henry Brent

God is the supreme symbol in which man expresses his destiny, and if that symbol is confused, his life is confused.

—Walter Lippman

Life is a wild flame. It flickers, the wind blows it, the tides drown it. Perfect life, or that which we on earth call God, is no thundering thing, clothed in lightning, but something lovely and unshaken in the mind, in the minds about us, that burns like a star for us to march by through all the night of the soul.

—John Masefield

The Christian knowledge and experience of God is summed up in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, namely, that "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passion; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver, of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

As so defined in the first of the "Articles of Religion" in *The Book of Common Prayer*, the doctrine seems at first glance to vindicate the complaint of many people that the Holy Trinity is the supreme mystification of Christian theologians. These people see in this abstract conception of God the substitution of metaphysics and philosophy for living religion; they cannot admit that faith in Christ requires of them the affirmation of a doctrine so tortuous and so incomprehensible. We grant readily the difficulty of facile comprehension of this doctrine and we admit that it is in all truth a wondrous mystery beyond our limited understanding; but we also know that we must seek to understand as best as we can and that we must endeavor to appreciate the great truths about God which the Church presents to us in this per-

plexing assertion that God is three Persons in one; that the Deity is three Persons in one God; that while God is one, He is also three Persons in one.

There is an old saying that "He who says he does not believe in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is in danger of losing his soul; he who says he understands the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is in danger of losing his mind." The situation truly is not that serious! Our proper attitude is suggested by Richard Hooker in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, a classic work of Anglican theology.

"Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, Whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His Name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him; and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess without confession that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and our reach. He is above, and we upon earth; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few."

Our words shall be "wary and few" for we are aware that here we are dealing with a mighty mystery, but we must make the effort to understand what the Christian doctrine of the nature of God means; for we are embarked on a quest, a search for knowledge of God.

With regard to the Christian understanding of God it ought to be made emphatically clear at the outset that in its origins the doctrine of the Holy Trinity came, not from the dialectic of philosophers nor out of the lecture room of some Neo-Platonist academy nor out of a conclave of bishops and theologians but directly out of the experience of ordinary men and women. In other words, it did not spring from the dexterous manipulation of abstract ideas; it sprang from the presence of concrete facts and realities which had to be accounted for. The Church evolved the

her major and only all-inclusive dogma to account for the facts of her actual experience. It is not a piece of gratuitous theological speculation, but rather a conviction that grew directly out of the life and experience of the early Christian fellowship. And remember that the Church herself did not first understand the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and then believe it, but rather that she first experienced it, then believed it, and through the ages seeks to understand it. The doctrine came into being simply because the early Christians discovered, as Christians ever since their day have likewise discovered, that you cannot say all that is contained in the word "God" until you have said "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Out of his own personal experience St. Paul arrived at his conception of the Triune God. It was not speculative theorizing, it was the plain facts of his soul's history, that made him say: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost . . ."

What St. Paul discovered and learned about God out of his own experience is what Christians of his and every succeeding generation have likewise found to be true, specifically this:

—that in God the Father there is love, love beyond our knowing, even such unbelievable love as Calvary demonstrates;

—that in Jesus Christ of Nazareth Who is God's Son there is redeeming grace that heals and saves, that rescues and renews, that releases and delivers, men; and

—that in God the Holy Spirit there is strength and comfort and power and an immediate, ever-present, leading hand in all truth God indwelling our hearts and lives.

God is one, St. Paul knew most certainly, if he knew nothing else; but God is Three in One. St. Paul also learned from his personal experience, as so also have we. And this is why, when Christians speak or think of God, they are compelled to use the words "Father" and "Son" and "Holy Spirit" in order to express at all adequately their knowledge and actual experience of God. So it was that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, a much more formidable-appearing definition than actually it is, came into being: simply



THE HOLY TRINITY

as a formal and intellectual statement of what Christians have discovered empirically to be the nature of God.

Keeping our words "wary and few", as the Judicious Hooker enjoins us, note how the doctrine of the Holy Trinity guards the essentials of the Christian Faith. It preserves the right to offer worship to Jesus Christ as God and also to the Holy Spirit as God, while at the same time retaining unimpaired the belief that there are three Persons in only one God. By declaring that God is One, though there be three Persons in that Unity, each one of which may be regarded and worshipped as God, the Church avoided polytheism. This doctrine, in other words, enabled the Church to maintain belief in monotheism, while at the same time permitting it to worship Jesus as God and the Holy Spirit as God which its experience forced it to do.

Note again how this doctrine of God, this understanding of God fashioned out of actual religious experience, enriches our knowledge of God. It gives us specific and concrete information about God. The doctrine stands

as a symbol that there are inherent eternally in the nature of God three elements: Fatherhood, Christlike character, and Activity by spiritual means. To the Christians, therefore, God is no confused symbol: he knows that in the God he worships there are, at least, these three things.

Theologically, the doctrine constitutes the attempt of Christian thinkers to explain how Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification are inter-related. God is, in the Father, the Creator; in the Son, the Redeemer; in the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier. The power of God in creation, the love of God manifest

in Christ, and the truth of God in the Holy Spirit—these all have a single being, origin and center.

The Christian doctrine of God may well be the philosophers' despair, but it is the simple, humble, religious man's delight and joy, for it assures him that God in the vast eternities is our Heavenly Father, that in history He is Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, and that in the hearts and lives of our run-of-the-mine folk like you and me God dwells and abides as divine spirit moving us and leading us by inward, invisible means in the paths He wills us to take.

Book Reviews

REFORMATION AND CATHOLICITY (*A statement*) New York, 1954 American Church Publications, pp. 47. paper \$1.00.

The significance of this booklet lies as much in its origins as in the quality of what it has to say. Out of the heart of orthodox, European Calvinism has come a document which for its theological fearlessness must give joy to every Catholic as it must give wonder for its humility. REFORMATION AND CATHOLICITY is a statement, together with commentaries upon it, by a group of Calvinist Pastors and Laymen, declaring the need of Apostolic Faith and Order and for the need of 're-formation' on the part of the Reformation Bodies towards a Catholic position of life and thought.

But this is no plea for a wearying journey back to a pre-Reformation homogeneity, but a bold marching forward to a rediscovery of Catholicism through the Reformation-principle, itself. The fourth paragraph of the Statement provides a clear indication of this. "In spite of the official criticism of the Roman Catholic conception of tradition we find among ourselves the establishment of a reformed tradition which is accepted without criticism. We consider this a renunciation of the reformed principle itself; for we do not consider the Reformation as a movement which originated in human individualism, but as an attempt born of the obedience of faith to confront the empirical Church once again with Holy Scripture. We are con-

vinced that for a reformed church a continual confrontation remains necessary, and that therefore all those achievements which research in the fields of biblical exegesis and ecclesiastical history have hitherto brought to light must be utilized even if they must lead to a "further reformation."

Arising from that research, the ground claim, assertions of the following nature can be made. (I present them here in brief):—That Holy Scripture embodies 'the nucleus and norm' of the Church's faith and life; that the Creeds of the undivided Church are a perpetual commitment of the Church and must be used to explain Holy Scripture; the necessity of sacraments as channels of grace; that Baptism is a re-generating sacrament and not just an 'affirmation and seal of a divine gift; that in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, our Lord is present 'substantially, really and truly' and that the sacrament actually re-presents Calvary; that the Incarnation of the Word of God is continued in the Holy Church and that, therefore, the Church is the Body of the Son of God . . ." in which . . . He has instituted . . . the ministry of apostles and bishops through which he has been pleased to carry on His salutary dominion among us."

A poignant, indeed heartrending, note is struck when, in stating the necessity of the apostolic succession and an ordained Ministry, it is written: "We therefore put the question as to whether it be advisable for an

Church to withdraw from this apostolic succession, and whether the ministry is not insufficiently appreciated when it is regarded only as a specialization of the ministry of all believers; furthermore are we not playing with Divine grace when, neglecting this ancient tradition of the Church and without asking ourselves if we possess Divine authority to administer the holy sacraments (and without earnestly seeking for a solution of this problem) we quietly continue to administer the holy sacraments."

At this point the Anglican Catholic can but give thanks for the stirring of the spirit among these bold men and pray fervently that they may have further strength to sustain and spread their vision of Catholic truth, as the Holy Ghost has vouchsafed it to them. As I write this review, conscious of the Dutch Reformed Church which ethos I have personally experienced, I can only marvel that after the long centuries that have sustained the wounds of the Fragmented Church, a group of voices, however small, from out a purely calvinistic heritage, can declare: "We believe that we can only hope for a true religious and ecclesiastical future for our people when we consciously seek connection with the historic line of Christian doctrine and life, of faith and Church order, from which we are clearly aware of being definitely separated at present." —marvel and give thanks that, as the commentary entitled *The Ecumenical Viewpoint*, indicates, Anglicanism has played such a significant part in the bringing forth of this striking eirenic fruit.

The commentaries themselves show a marked indebtedness to Anglican scholarship and thought, from the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888 to the late Bishop of Oxford's *THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY*, (p. 41) While there is little that is *novel* in the several apologies submitted for a renewal of Catholic faith and Order, what is written is clear, and the arguments used, forceful. Though brevity, of course, imposes its own limitations.

Among the Appendixes included, is one on the "Hilversum Convent" out of which this truly amazing document, has emerged. It makes exciting reading. We learn how this group of pastors and laymen of the Dutch



THE ROOD—HOLY CROSS MONASTERY

Reformed Church came together in the great war and under the German Occupation and rediscovered the doctrines of the Church, Her Sacraments, and the value of a catholic spirituality. Influenced by Anglican theology, the publications of Freidrich Heiler and contacts with, one imagines, the best of modern Roman Catholics, such as are to be found on the Continent of Europe, the group grew and commenced to publish a series of articles which have culminated in the present work. They have continued to grow and while attacked and abused by many of their co-religionists, they have found respect and acceptance by others. All of this activity has taken shape within the framework of prayer, and a translation of the Benedictine breviary by one of their number has resulted in the *opus dei* being offered by many of them. They have close contacts with a "catholic" group in the German Lutheran Church, a Minister of which has valid priest's orders

and is able to celebrate the German Mass, thus being able to fulfil the desire of the majority "who hungered to receive Communion from the hands of a validly ordained priest."

One can only wish that this document be read by every literate Christian, and not least in our own Communion, by both those who ignore or depreciate their own Catholic heritage, and those Catholic brethren who have expressed doubt in the past of the wisdom of Anglicans engaging in any full-hearted way with the Protestant Bodies. If we are true to the Faith as we have received it, fearless in our proclamation of it, throwing away nothing, then the unreal and confusing 'inter-communion' mentality, might give way, even here in America, to the realization that unanimity in the Faith must pre-

cede all else,—as this Statement from Dutch Protestantism magnificently reveals, we may be thankful, indeed then, to the American Church Union, for offering us this work, and our gratitude is not diminished if we insert a plea for better proof-reading in the future products; mistakes, always annoying, often confusing, simply abound through the pages of this booklet.

—D. A. V.

PREACHING THE WORD OF GOD, by Frederick M. Morris (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1954) pp. 157. Cloth. \$2.25.

Here at last is a book on preaching which does not quote Edgar Guest poems! It is a good piece of work from a man who is content to give methods of charming congregations and filling the pews. As a matter of fact he goes so far as to say that if a clergyman preaches sincerely and directly he is bound to antagonize some people.

The book is more than just a manual for the preacher, it is also a work to illumine the layman as to what he should expect of the sermon, for but two chapters are expressly written for the preacher alone. There is an active response demanded of the layman in the pew, and he must be taught how to listen and respond, rather than to expect to sit back and enjoy passively. Too many congregations think that when they are called upon to exercise their minds during the Sunday morning sermon they are breaking the Fourth Commandment. "That was a very intellectual discourse, this morning," was said to the rector at the church door, in a usually a veiled manner of saying: "I did not care to exercise my mind over your sermon."

The author is absolutely right in insisting that the Gospel is the only fit subject for the sermon and all else must fit into it. The Gospel is not to be preached in a vacuum; the times must be interpreted so that the man in the pew will not find what he hears in church irrelevant to what he hears or reads during the week.

The reviewer, however, feels that the author has left out an important preparation to intelligent hearing of sermons. It is not enough simply to preach well and thoughtfully for fifteen or twenty minutes on Sunday





MOUNT CALVARY MONASTERY—THE PATIO GARDEN

orning. The tide of secularism has gone so far that the basic concepts of Christianity no longer mean anything to the vast number of people. What, for instance, does "righteousness" mean to most church-goers? Perhaps the synonym is "respectability," and that is not what the Bible means. Bible classes, study groups, "cells" or the like are the best means of explaining Gospel categories to people. There must be opportunities for these questions to be hammered out in an informal way, where people can speak up and let the leader know just how far he has been understood. The reviewer has found that in preaching missions, he has been able to reach more when there has been a discussion group after the mission, tiring and exacting as this may be. The sermon time should be devoted to expounding and declaring, and not the occasion of defining terms.

We have noted another fault in this work: it is too Christocentric. Let it not be thought that the preaching of Christ is of no importance. But there is the great danger of forgetting that our Lord is the revelation of the Father, to whom by the Cross we are reconciled. When preaching becomes too Christ centered there is that attendant danger

that we have Jesus held up to us as the great human example. The author would be the last to fall into this "liberal" snare, but unfortunately he has left the door open to the entrance of this fatal error. (In passing we might note that there is an obvious slip on page 74 where our Lord is called the third Person of the Trinity.) There should have been more said about the office and work of the Holy Ghost, for without Him, Christianity is a religion without grace.

Perhaps the best practical advice is given in regard to the preparation of sermons, and here all parish priests should take note. Before the sermon is composed the preacher should be able to write the gist of the message in a sentence, and at every step in composition there should be reference to this statement. Too often the reviewer has listened to sermons when he has been reasonably certain that the preacher sat down before a typewriter and just pounded out five, six or seven pages, calculated to cover twenty minutes, and called it a sermon. On one occasion we heard a bishop who is reputed to be quite an orator include five different subjects, worthy of separate treatment, into one sermon. The task involved in writing a

sermon, should make the preacher more exact, economical in expression and the final product thoroughly cohesive.

Lastly, it should be noted that the author is humble. He is fully ware that we preach in a confused age and the preacher suffers from the limitations of his *milieu*. This will reduce that overconfidence which is so often the cause of messages failing to get over the pulpit.

—J. G.

Notes

The General Chapter of the Order of the Holy Cross met on Friday, August 6, being the Feast of the Transfiguration, and elected the Reverend Leopold Kroll to the office of father superior of the community. Immediately after the election, the Right Reverend Robert E. Campbell, retiring superior, installed the superior-elect. Later in the day the chapter met for business. Father Superior announced the appointment of Fr. Turkington to the office of assistant superior; and Bishop Campbell as novice master. Father Taylor who has returned from Africa is to be stationed at Saint Andrew's School.

Bishop Campbell conducted the Long Retreat from the Order of Saint Helena at the Newburgh Convent.

Father Hawkins supplied at Saint Andrew's Church, New Paltz on Sundays during August.

Father Harris returned to Baltimore to continue for the rest of the month as priest-in-charge of Grace and Saint Peter's Church.

Father Bicknell conducted a mission for young people at Saint Augustine's Chapel, Trinity Parish, New York City.

Brother James represented the Order at the special booth of the Holy Cross Press at the Anglican Congress in Minneapolis,



A VISIT TO THE MONASTERY

It is now possible for all of you to enjoy the beauties of the Monastery here at West Park and see the Religious Life as we live it. The Order of the Holy Cross offers to lend sets of colored film-slide (2"x2") to parish groups and other organizations wishing to learn more about the Religious Life. There are about seventy slides illustrating every phase of our life and work and covering the full round of "a day in the life of a monk." A mimeographed script has been prepared describing each slide. Users will find "An American Cloister" by Father Hughson, O.H.C., helpful in obtaining additional background material and this book is available at \$1.00 from Holy Cross Press. The slides are not for sale, but will be sent on loan for the expense of postage and the offering which is received at their showing. Address requests for the slides to: "O.H.C. Slides," Order of the Holy Cross, West Park, New York.

Minnesota; and assisted Father Bicknell with the mission in New York.

Current Appointments

Bishop Campbell will conduct a retreat for associates of the Community of Saint Mary, at Peekskill, New York, September 3-6.

Father Hawkins will conduct a retreat for the Sisters of Saint Anne at their convent in Kingston, New York, September 5-13.

Father Harris will conduct one of the retreats for the Seminarists Associate at Holy Cross Monastery, September 7-10.

Father Packard will conduct a retreat for Seminarists Associate at the House of Redeemer, New York City, September 17.

Father Adams will conduct the annual priests' retreat at Holy Cross Monastery September 14-17; and will conduct a retreat for deaconesses in New Haven, Connecticut September 23-25.

An Ordo of Worship and Intercession Sept. - Oct. 1954

- 6 St. Cyprian BM Double R gl col 2) Edward Bouverie Pusey C—*vocations to the religious life*
- 7 Ember Friday V Proper Mass col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib* —*for the increase of the ministry*
- 8 Ember Saturday V Proper Mass col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for all deacons*
- 9 14th Sunday after Trinity Semidouble G gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib* cr pref of Trinity—*thanks giving for our benefactors*
- 20 Vigil of St. Matthew V col 2) of St. Mary 3) for the Church or Bishop—*for the bishops of the Church*
- 21 St Matthew Ap Ev Double II Cl R gl cr pref of Apostles—*for all ordinands*
- 22 SS *Maurice and Companions* Simple R gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for the Seminarists Associate*
- 23 *Thursday* G Mass of Trinity xiv col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for the Order of Saint Helena*
- 24 *Friday* G Mass as on September 23—*for the Confraternity of the Love of God*
- 25 *Of St Mary* Simple W gl col 2) Lancelot Andrewes BC 3) of the Holy Spirit pref BVM (Veneration) —*for the American Church Union*
- 26 15th Sunday after Trinity Semidouble G gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib* cr pref Trinity—*for the anxious, discouraged and afraid*
- 27 SS *Cosmas and Damian* MM Simple R gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for the Priests Associate*
- 28 *Tuesday* G Mass of Trinity xv col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for Church musicians*
- 29 St. Michael and All Angels Double I Cl gl cr—*for Saint Michael's Monastery, Tennessee*
- 30 St Jerome CD Double W gl cr—*for the Holy Cross Press*

October 1 *St Remigius* BC Simple W gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for all in civil authority*

- 2 Holy Guardian Angels Gr Double W gl cr—*for refugee children*
- 3 16th Sunday after Trinity Semidouble G gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib* cr pref of Trinity—*for the sorrowing*
- 4 St. Francis C Gr Double W gl—*for the Franciscans*
- 5 St. Placidus and Companions MM Simple R gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for the Oblates of Mount Calvary*
- 6 St. Bruno C Double W gl col 2) St. Faith VM—*for the increase of the contemplative life*
- 7 *Thursday* G Mass of Trinity xvi col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for the faithful departed*
- 8 *Friday* G Mass as on October 7—*for the Confraternity of the Christian life*
- 9 SS Denys B Rusticus and Eleutherius MM Double R gl—*for the persecuted*
- 10 17th Sunday after Trinity Semidouble G gl col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib* cr pref of Trinity—*for Christian reunion*
- 11 *Monday* G Mass of Trinity xvii col 2) of the Saints 3) for the faithful departed 4) *ad lib*—*for Christian family life*
- 12 *Tuesday* G Mass of Trinity xvii col 2) of the Saints 3) *ad lib*—*for social and economic justice*
- 13 St. Edward KC Double W gl—*for the Liberian Mission*
- 14 *Thursday* G Mass as on October 12—*for the Servants of Christ the King*
- 15 St. Teresa V Double W—*for Church theologians*
- 16 *Of St Mary* Simple W gl col 2) of the Holy Spirit 3) for the Church or Bishop pref BVM (Veneration)—*for the peace of the world*

Note—On the days indicated in italics ordinary votive and requiem Masses may be said

. . . Press Notes . . .

UNRULY MEMBER. We are publishing a small book on the sins of speech with suggestions for their correction. A formidable task! The title is *The Taming of the Tongue* and it was written by a laywoman, Elaine Stone. Copies should be ready by the time this notice appears and the price will be fifty-cents.

ALL SAINTS DAY. Holy Cross Tract No. 8 *The Saints* contains brief, simple and clear teaching as to how we can make operative, in daily living, the great affirmation we make every time we say the Creed. We suggest to pastors that they mail a copy to all in their cure well in advance of the Feast. Price is only \$1.50 per hundred, and we will pay postage on cash orders.

ALL SOULS DAY. We have two Tracts in the Holy Cross Tract series—*The Holy Souls* and *Purgatory*. They sell at same price as above. For more detailed teaching on the state of the departed we suggest *Our Beloved Dead* at \$1.00 per dozen, \$8.00 per Hundred.

NEVER HEARD OF THEM. The Episcopal Church was well represented at the recent Summer School of Alcohol Studies held at Yale University from July 5th-29th. There were ten clergy and several laymen enrolled. We met laymen who were astonished to discover that we have monks and nuns in the Episcopal Church. Some of the clergy confessed that they have never seen a "live monk" although they had heard of

them. Some of the clergy had never visited a monastery.

CATHOLIC CONGRESS. This is being written on the day of our departure to attend the Congress in Chicago where we will have a small exhibit. The Brother James has prepared an interesting album of photographs showing the various activities of our Order and we will distribute some free copies of *Holy Cross Magazine*.

ANGLICAN CONGRESS. From Chicago we will journey to Minneapolis to attend the great world-wide meeting of Anglican Bishops, Clergy and Laymen. The Press will have an exhibit in the Cathedral Hall, and Brother James, O. H. C. and Father Dral, business Manager of the Press, will represent The Order official—not as delegates, of course. We are looking forward to meeting clergy and laymen from every Province of the Anglican Communion.

BOUQUET AND PUFF. "All persons who are confirmed in St. ---'s Church receive as a gift from the parish, a copy of *Augustine's Prayer Book*, a manual of devotions for members of the Episcopal Church --- (and) printed by the Holy Cross Press. This is the best such book available in America today. It should be of great help to those who receive it."

HOLY CROSS PRESS

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